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Chairman: Mr. Mapuranga ..... (Zimbabwe)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 84: Effects of atomic radiation (*continued*) (A/52/46; A/C.4/52/L.2)

1. **Mr. Benítez Saénz** (Uruguay), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR), as well as Bolivia and Chile, said that at its June 1997 session the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation had, with a view to the optimal utilization of its technical capabilities, considered the question of the possible inclusion in its terms of reference of such topics as chemical and environmental pollution.

2. The basic task of the Scientific Committee was to serve as a source of background information for the international scientific community as a whole; that work constituted scientific assistance to countries suffering from the effects of atomic radiation. The growing complexity of the issues discussed made it necessary to intensify the efforts being made in two areas: first, to help to raise the level of awareness of those issues and the magnitude of their effects, and, second, to continue the search for rapid and viable solutions.

3. During the discussions in the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System, the idea had been put forward of suggesting to the Scientific Committee that it should submit its report to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the World Health Organization (WHO), so that the General Assembly could take their comments into account in its discussion of the report. He urged delegations to put that idea into practice as soon as possible.

4. **Mr. Santaputra** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the increased use of atomic energy brought with it new perils; there was thus a vital need for continuing study, up-to-date information and revised safety measures. He urged Member States, the specialized agencies of the United Nations and other bodies, in particular the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and IAEA, as well as non-governmental organizations to continue to render assistance to the Scientific Committee and increase cooperation in that field. He welcomed the report of the Scientific Committee (A/52/46) and its efforts to provide delegations with information on the effects on, and risks to, mankind and the environment of atomic radiation.

5. Nuclear technology and its proper uses for peaceful purposes could be very helpful to mankind. Many benefits could be derived from nuclear power generation and the use of nuclear technology in medicine, industry and agriculture, which played an increasingly important role in raising living standards, especially in developing countries. He called for increased transfers of nuclear technology to developing countries, unimpeded access by those countries to nuclear technology and the provision of assistance to them in that area, as stipulated in article IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

6. With regard to the harmful effects of atomic radiation, prevention was better than cure. The most effective way to mitigate the potential adverse effects of radiation was to implement non-discriminatory and multilaterally agreed measures to control or eliminate its undesirable sources. It was necessary to enhance the existing system that provided early warning of potential risks. He urged strict adherence to IAEA nuclear safety standards in the interest of minimizing those risks.

7. The problem of illicit trafficking in nuclear materials posed a great risk and a serious threat. Steps should be taken to ensure that all nuclear power plants operated in accordance with internationally accepted standards. The irresponsible dumping of nuclear waste and materials in the high seas should be stopped. The international transfer of nuclear waste and materials should be carried out in full conformity with existing international safety standards.

8. With regard to the military use of nuclear technology, ASEAN supported the efforts aimed at the total eradication of nuclear weapons within a specified time-frame.

9. He noted with satisfaction that on 27 March 1997, the South-East Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, signed by the leaders of the South-East Asian States at Bangkok in December 1995, had entered into force. He again called upon all nuclear-weapon States to accede to the Protocol to that Treaty.

10. **Mr. Mounkhou** (Mongolia) said that his delegation welcomed the report of the Scientific Committee. It had taken note of that Committee's work over the past year, and would follow with interest assessment of information on radiation exposures and its comprehensive analysis of the effects of radiation on living organisms, representing the level of knowledge at the end of the millennium.

11. Mongolia was grateful to the Scientific Committee for its reports and research, which had increased the stock of knowledge about the effects and dangers of atomic radiation and had led to the introduction of national and international standards of protection against the harmful effects of radiation. His delegation was sure that the Scientific

Committee would continue its fruitful work in the coming years.

12. At a time when the United Nations had embarked on a process of reform, the Scientific Committee should also review its role and functions. With its impressive array of scientific resources and highly qualified specialists, the Scientific Committee could undoubtedly bring great practical benefits to Member States. His delegation was particularly interested in the experience it had acquired in radiation dosimetry and radiobiological research. The Scientific Committee might consider the possibility of undertaking research on individual countries and of giving technical assistance in determining radioactive contamination levels in countries that might request such help.

13. Lastly, he hoped that the resolution on the effects of atomic radiation that was due to be adopted would help the Scientific Committee to meet Member States' special needs in relation to atomic radiation.

14. **Mr. Miranda** (Peru) said that his country greatly valued the professional standards and scientific competence of the Scientific Committee's reports and the independence of its assessments.

15. The Scientific Committee's programme of work duly reflected the important tasks entrusted to it by the General Assembly with regard to the consequences, levels and dangers of atomic radiation.

16. When put to use in raising living standards through the development of medicine, industry and agriculture, the results of the Scientific Committee's research would be extremely significant for the whole international community, particularly for developing countries, which faced special difficulties in gaining access to scientific information. Peru awaited with interest the Scientific Committee's report on the state of knowledge of the effects of ionizing radiation worldwide and of its biological consequences.

17. His country particularly emphasized the importance of the Scientific Committee's cooperation with other United Nations bodies, and also with other international organizations working in that field; such cooperation should be expanded and strengthened on a mutually advantageous basis. Peru urged all Member States to supply the Scientific Committee with all available information that might help it to carry out its research more effectively.

18. **Mr. Syargeev** (Belarus), speaking on local exposures and effects of the Chernobyl accident, said that over 2 million people, inhabiting a quarter of the territory of Belarus, had been affected by radiation. The economic and financial loss suffered by Belarus as a result of the accident was equivalent to 32 of the country's annual budgets, or a sum of US$ 235 billion.

19. Secondly, regarding the epidemiological evaluation of radiation-induced cancer, he said that following the accident Belarus had seen a rise in infant mortality and a fall in birth rates. Some 500,000 children below the age of 17 lived in the contaminated territories. The incidence of cancer of the thyroid gland among children and of breast cancer among women had risen.

20. Chernobyl was a long-term problem that could be resolved only if the whole international community pooled its efforts. Outlining the main results of the work carried out over the past year by the scientific conferences in Geneva, Minsk, Vienna and Kiev, he said that the conferences had established the progressive deterioration in the health of the affected population; confirmed the formal recognition by the international scientific community of the true proportions of the Chernobyl tragedy; indicated that to eliminate the consequences of Chernobyl would take many decades; and underlined the importance of activating international cooperation in providing assistance and in continuing with scientific research directed at overcoming the consequences of the disaster.

21. Belarus was seriously concerned that, in the light of the current discussion on the closing of the Chernobyl nuclear power station, the problem of eliminating the medical and environmental effects of the disaster was being relegated to the background.

22. He drew attention to two major initiatives put forward by the President of Belarus at the Vienna conference on Chernobyl, one on the creation of an international centre for Chernobyl problems, which would unite the efforts of scientists from different countries who were conducting research in that area, and one relating to the need to establish a fund to protect the planet, which could receive a portion of the earnings of nuclear engineering companies and use them for the elimination of the effects of nuclear disasters and the implementation of major environmental programmes.

23. Belarus was interested in expanding contacts with the Scientific Committee, particularly in the preparation of new international radiation protection safety standards. His delegation was putting forward a specific proposal for the holding of an international scientific conference in 1998 under the sponsorship of the Scientific Committee to formulate a programme of international scientific research on the medical and environmental consequences of the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power station.

24. Belarus wished to stress the extreme importance of upholding the principles of scientific competence and ensuring greater transparency in the activities of the Scientific Committee. In that connection, his delegation wished to register its deep concern at the current trend towards omitting consideration of the report of the Scientific Committee from the agenda of General Assembly sessions and attempts to assign its functions to IAEA or WHO, which in fact would mean eliminating it. Consideration at General Assembly sessions of the Scientific Committee's reports, notwithstanding their technical nature, was of great political interest. Strengthening the role and increasing the authority of the United Nations would promote the impartial and independent work of the Scientific Committee rather than its elimination.

25. **Ms. Arystanbekova** (Kazakhstan) said that her delegation attached great importance to the discussion in the Fourth Committee of the problem of the effects of atomic radiation within the framework of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly. That issue was of direct interest to Kazakhstan, which was making a great effort to solve the problems posed by the testing of nuclear weapons over many years at the former Soviet nuclear test site at Semipalatinsk.

26. That site, which had been created in the territory of Kazakhstan 50 years earlier, was the largest in the world, with a surface area of 18,500 square kilometres; some 470 tests, or roughly 70 per cent of all nuclear tests conducted by the former USSR, had been carried out there. The health of Kazakhstan's population and the country's environment had suffered tremendous damage, the actual scope of which remained unknown to the international community because of the conditions of strict secrecy prevailing at the time.

27. At the time the nuclear tests were conducted no measures had been taken to protect the population from radiation, nor had the necessary medical examinations been carried out. According to statistics, during the more than 40 years that tests had been conducted at the Semipalatinsk site, some 1.2 million people had been exposed to ionized radiation. The highest level of oncological diseases in Kazakhstan had been registered in the areas around the former Semipalatinsk site, and from 1950 onward the child mortality rate had increased between 5 and 10 times while life expectancy had decreased.

28. Under a decree issued by the President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbaev, on 29 August 1991, the nuclear test site had been closed forever, and that unprecedented step had been deeply appreciated by the international community. In September 1996, Kazakhstan had reaffirmed its firm commitment to peace by signing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In September 1997 the country had hosted an international conference on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons which had dealt specifically with the problems of radiation safety and rehabilitation of the territory of the former test site. Conference participants had visited the former test site and had once again been convinced of the need to provide assistance to Kazakhstan, which was working to overcome the serious consequences of nuclear testing. In his message to conference participants, the Secretary-General had stressed that the problem of environmental degradation in Kazakhstan caused by nuclear tests called for the international community's attention.

29. On the former test site the National Nuclear Research Centre of the Republic of Kazakhstan had been established; Kazakhstan had passed a law on the rehabilitation of persons who had suffered from the nuclear tests, a programme of medical rehabilitation for the population of the Semipalatinsk region had been developed and a series of other measures had been taken. However, Kazakhstan currently lacked the necessary medical, material and financial means and sufficient experience to provide a full measure of government support to the suffering population. It could not by itself compensate the damage done to the population's health and to the environment.

30. As the President of Kazakhstan had stated at the special session of the General Assembly earlier in the year, nuclear weapons were a tragedy not only for the people of Kazakhstan but for all the nations of the world; thus there was every reason to speak about the responsibility of the nuclear Powers for the damage done to the people and the natural environment of States in which tests had been conducted. She drew attention in that connection to the proposal by the President of Kazakhstan to concretize that responsibility in the form of an international fund for the rehabilitation of the health of the population and the environment of regions affected by nuclear tests, and she expressed the hope that the States Members of the United Nations and the specialized agencies of the United Nations system would respond to those initiatives.

31. Kazakhstan greatly appreciated the work and the noble goals of the Scientific Committee and was willing to cooperate with it fully. In her delegation's view, the problems of the effects of atomic radiation, which Kazakhstan was facing in real life, afforded a basis for the development, with interested countries, of joint research programmes in Kazakhstan. Medical examinations of affected persons and scientific research in the vicinity of the former test site would also be useful to Kazakhstan and other interested parties.

32. **Mr. Semenenko** (Ukraine) said that the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in 1986 had been a real national tragedy for Ukraine. The state of health of many people living in Ukraine who had been affected by the consequences of the accident was cause for particular concern. The suppression of the body's immune system, cancer induction and genetic damage were just a few of the direct results of long-term radiation contamination of the environment.

33. The Chernobyl disaster had also caused large-scale social and economic problems. Over the period 1990-1996 alone, more than 53,000 people had been resettled from contaminated zones to environmentally clean locations. Every year, up to 15 per cent of the State budget was spent on reimbursing the losses caused by the accident and paying out social allowances to people who had been affected by it.

34. In view of the unprecedented scale of the disaster and its transnational character, the overall solution of the problem was impossible without large-scale international assistance. Special attention should be given to the reconstruction of the sarcophagus that had been built over the damaged reactor. By the most modest estimates, that would require US$ 1 billion.

35. His delegation hoped that those and other problems would be properly addressed at the Donor Conference of the "Group of Seven" countries, which would be held in New York on 20 November 1997, and at the forthcoming United Nations Donor Conference. It also hoped that the United Nations inter-agency needs assessment mission to the affected regions, including Ukraine, would serve to strengthen international cooperation in overcoming all the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster.

36. **Mr. Hrbáč** (Slovakia) supported the statement made by the representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union, and he wished to make a few additional comments on behalf of his delegation. As a country with an active programme in the field of the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, Slovakia had been providing relevant data to the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation and was making full use of the Scientific Committee's results in its own practical activities.

37. During recent years, significant progress had been achieved in the study of radiation affects and risk assessment, largely thanks to the Scientific Committee. His delegation welcomed the Scientific Committee's latest report and endorsed its efforts to put greater emphasis on the assessment of the combined effects of radiation and other agents as well as the assessment of radiation-induced cancer and hereditary effects.

38. Slovakia hoped that the traditional consensus on the agenda item under consideration would be maintained. New paragraph 9 of the draft resolution reflected the suggestion by some delegations to strengthen the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the World Health Organization (WHO) in an area that had been dominated by the Scientific Committee. His delegation would study attentively the recommendations of IAEA and WHO on the functions and role of the Scientific Committee. At the same time, his delegation wished to point out that the Scientific Committee had so far been free of political, social or scientific bias, and any step that could weaken the impartiality of such an important activity as the study of the effects of atomic radiation should be very carefully considered.

39. **Mr. Hu Zhaoming** (China) welcomed the results of the forty-sixth session of the Scientific Committee, which had considered extremely important problems that affected the health and living environment of the current and future generations. The Chinese Government supported the Scientific Committee's activities and highly appreciated the success it had achieved. His delegation was pleased to note that the Scientific Committee was preparing an extensive assessment of information on radiation exposures worldwide and a comprehensive review of the biological effects of radiation.

40. The Chinese Government attached great importance to economic development and the state of the environment and people's health. The study on assessment criteria and methods of inspection for optimized application of radiation protection in nuclear plants had been incorporated into China's national programme of key technologies and research and development projects of the ninth five-year plan. China's national standard on protection against radiation was being prepared.

41. His delegation hoped that, in its future work, in which China would take an active part, the Scientific Committee would provide Member States, especially the developing countries, with the necessary information on the effects of atomic radiation.

42. **Mr. Myung Chul Hahm** (Republic of Korea) said that his delegation highly commended the efforts of the Scientific Committee, which had greatly contributed to the improvement of standards that helped protect mankind and the environment from the harmful effects of atomic radiation. The Republic of Korea welcomed the cooperation between the Scientific Committee and other specialized

agencies of the United Nations system, such as IAEA, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and WHO, since inter-agency cooperation was essential for establishing strong global guarantees against the harmful effects of atomic radiation.

43. As a country that depended heavily on nuclear energy, the Republic of Korea attached great importance to ensuring safety in nuclear-related activities. His delegation noted that the reports and studies provided by the Scientific Committee had been highly valuable in helping to enhance standards for radiation protection. They had also helped technicians and managers in the Republic of Korea to lay a scientific basis for formulating new measures to guard against the harmful effects of radiation.

44. His delegation looked forward to the early completion of an extensive assessment of information on radiation exposures worldwide and a comprehensive review of the biological effects of radiation, which were mentioned in the report of the Scientific Committee on its forty-sixth session. The Republic of Korea, for its part, would continue furnishing relevant information.

45. **Mr. Hassan** (Pakistan) said that in-depth research over the years had revealed that atomic radiation could have devastating effects on man and the environment. It was therefore the collective responsibility of the international community to exchange information and to take all necessary measures to obviate the risk of radiation. Cooperation in that sector within the framework of the United Nations had begun in 1955 with the establishment of the Scientific Committee. His delegation expressed appreciation to the Scientific Committee for its contribution in highlighting the adverse effects of atomic radiation on man and the environment. The General Assembly had assessed progress in that regard and provided directions for further research and cooperation, and it must continue to do so.

46. In the report compiled by the Scientific Committee in June 1997, a wide spectrum of areas had been identified on which future study should focus; the Scientific Committee must be encouraged to coordinate further research in those vital areas.

47. His delegation was prepared to respond positively to the Scientific Committee's request for assistance in its work by providing relevant information on the subjects of interest for the future programme of study so that the work could be based on the broadest and most up-to-date scientific and technical information. Pakistan recognized that international institutions like IAEA and WHO had been of enormous help to the Scientific Committee and encouraged them to continue to cooperate with that body.

48. In order to minimize the risk of atomic radiation, it was necessary to take measures to reduce and eventually eliminate large stockpiles of nuclear weapons. The tragedies of Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Chernobyl could not be allowed to happen again, and it was the responsibility of the international community to protect future generations from the scourge of nuclear warfare.

49. The end of the cold war had brightened the prospects of cooperation among the major Powers in the nuclear field, and in 1996 the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty had been concluded. Pakistan had consistently supported the objective of a comprehensive nuclear test ban. Unfortunately, the Treaty fell short of the expectations of the international community as an effective measure for nuclear disarmament. That shortcoming should be redressed by the inclusion in the text of legally binding commitments to the achievement of nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specific time-frame.

50. Efforts to protect the planet from the adversities of radiation must not be at the cost of the benefits of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, since it was the sovereign right of every State to acquire nuclear technology for peaceful uses, particularly in the fields of medicine, energy and agriculture. Moreover, technological advancement should not be monopolized by certain countries, and there should be a sharing of knowledge and information among the developed and developing countries.

51. Pakistan supported the continuation of the work of the Scientific Committee and opposed the idea of restricting or eliminating its role. It believed that the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System needed to review its recommendations in that regard. Pakistan was firmly convinced that the Scientific Committee was a representative forum for the exchange of information among Member States on atomic radiation; if its work was transferred to other bodies, the representative character of the Scientific Committee would be destroyed and that might result in slowing down the progress of work in that vital area of research and international cooperation.

52. **Mr. Samana** (Papua New Guinea) said that the issue of atomic radiation had been on the agenda of the United Nations and other organizations like the South Pacific Forum for a long time. His delegation, like the delegations of most neighbouring States, had repeatedly called on the international community, and especially those States that had been directly involved in nuclear testing in the South Pacific region — the United States of America and France — to do

more in the way of assisting the peoples directly affected. Those delegations were encouraged by the efforts currently being made by those countries but reiterated their call on those States to draw up comprehensive plans for the full clean-up of nuclear waste in the region.

53. As the representative of the Marshall Islands had indicated, the effects of atomic radiation were very real; they affected the daily lives of the people and could also affect future generations. He joined the appeal of the Marshall Islands for international assistance in treating the suffering populations in that country and neighbouring South Pacific countries.

54. Papua New Guinea commended the work that was being undertaken by the Scientific Committee; it supported in principle the draft resolution put forward by the delegation of Germany although it wished to cooperate with that delegation in strengthening the resolution a little so as to take account of some of the concerns already mentioned. He hoped that the Committee would seriously consider those changes, especially in the common approach of the South Pacific countries to bringing certain medical, scientific and other socio-economic benefits to alleviate the sufferings of the populations of the countries affected.

55. The participants at the recent meeting of the heads of Government of the South Pacific Forum countries had clearly indicated that the issue under consideration was of paramount concern in the region and reaffirmed their commitment to the provisions of the South Pacific Nuclear-Free-Zone Treaty and the Waigani Convention by calling for adherence to those treaties and their protocols.

56. As indicated by the representative of the Marshall Islands, the people of the region, especially those of the Marshall Islands, Kiribati and Micronesia, did not know the true extent of the personal injuries and environmental damage caused by the 67 nuclear tests conducted by the administering Power from 1946 to 1957. Papua New Guinea joined those countries in their call for assistance in medical, scientific and other socio-economic fields to alleviate the sufferings of the population.

57. **Mr. Buni** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) drew the attention of members of the Committee to the report of the Chairman of the Scientific Committee concerning the effects of atomic radiation and radioactive fallout and, in that connection, noted with concern the danger of radioactive waste as a result of Israel's nuclear activities. With the help of the United States, Israel had established its own nuclear arsenal, which presented a threat to the region as a whole.

58. His delegation took note of the moratorium on nuclear tests introduced by the nuclear Powers and urged the international community to make every effort to save mankind from the danger inherent in nuclear arsenals. The use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes could promote prosperity and progress, but the international community must pay attention to the attempts made by some countries to dictate their conditions for the transfer of nuclear technology to certain developing countries which wished to use it for peaceful purposes. His delegation urged the developed countries to help the developing countries to utilize nuclear energy for the good of their peoples.

59. **The Chairman** informed the members of the Committee that Slovakia, Brazil, Indonesia and Kazakhstan had joined the list of sponsors of draft resolution A/C.4/52/L.2 and suggested that the Committee should take a decision on it.

60. **Mr. Hassan** (Pakistan), speaking in explanation of his delegation's position, said that it had not become a sponsor of the draft resolution at the current session because it had some reservations concerning the addition of paragraph 9.

61. **Mr. Hu Zhaoming** (China) said that his delegation had carefully studied the draft resolution and believed that it could provide an excellent basis for work. His delegation regretted that it had been unable to take part in the informal consultations, but believed that the draft resolution was the result of serious work. At the same time, it noted that the text of the draft resolution was marred by repetitions. For instance, in the sixth preambular paragraph reference was made to section XII, paragraph 38, of the annex to resolution 51/241 of 31 July 1997 on strengthening of the United Nations system. The content of that paragraph coincided with that of paragraph 9 except that in paragraph 9 the last sentence of paragraph 38 had been omitted. His delegation would like an explanation on that point and suggested that the text of the draft resolution would be improved if paragraph 9 was omitted. If the majority of delegations believed it necessary to retain that paragraph, then perhaps it would be expedient to include the last sentence of paragraph 38 in paragraph 9 of the draft resolution under consideration.

62. **Mr. Felicio** (Brazil), speaking on behalf of the sponsors of the draft resolution, said that the delegation of Germany, which had acted as coordinator during the consultations, would reply to the questions which had been raised. His delegation, however, wished to point out that paragraph 9 only repeated the decision taken by consensus by the General Assembly, in plenary meeting, at its fifty-first session when it was considering the report of the Open-

ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System. It was quite probable that, judging from the course of the debate, there was some misunderstanding of the nature of the work of the Scientific Committee; in that connection, he wished to explain that during the discussion there had been no proposal that the item concerning the Scientific Committee should be removed from the Committee's agenda. On the contrary, in order to achieve real results from the consideration of the report, it was essential to have the necessary technical knowledge and resources, which were at present lacking. The General Assembly had therefore adopted, by consensus, the aforementioned decision in which it requested that consultations should be held with IAEA and WHO so that it would be possible to carry out a more knowledgeable analysis of the report of the Scientific Committee.

63. **Mr. Meier-Klodt** (Germany) noted that, although the draft resolution had been introduced by his delegation, it had been acting as an "honest broker" as current Chairman of the Scientific Committee. Thus, his delegation's role had been, with the help of other delegations, to achieve a consensus, which from the outset had been characterized by particular attention to the aforementioned resolution.

64. As to the questions raised by other delegations, he noted that the Scientific Committee had very limited possibilities on account of its small membership and that, in order to describe the possibilities and limitations of its work in more detail, its Chairman, Mr. Kaul, had been invited to come to New York. In including the new paragraph 7, the sponsors had been endeavouring to introduce a new element; that had been confirmed by Mr. Kaul, who, during bilateral talks with the delegations concerned, had proposed that they should provide the Scientific Committee with additional information so that it could take it into account within its terms of reference. The Scientific Committee did not have an opportunity to send missions to the regions and therefore had to work only on the basis of the information it received.

65. With regard to the decision already adopted by consensus by the Open-ended High-level Working Group on Strengthening the United Nations System, two references to that decision had been included in the draft resolution — in the sixth preambular paragraph and in paragraph 9, as the representative of China had rightly pointed out. That had been done after the general debate and bilateral contacts between many delegations. Some delegations, including those of China and Pakistan, believed that the reference in the preamble was sufficient. Others held the strong view that, if the wording of paragraph 38 of the annex to resolution 51/241 was taken into account, it was essential to add those provisions to the draft resolution which had been submitted.

66. It should be noted that the wording of the paragraph in the annex to the resolution on the strengthening of the United Nations system was in the form of a recommendation. It stated that "the General Assembly should invite the International Atomic Energy Agency ..." and, later, "the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation should be asked ...". The idea had been that, since the recommendation had been made, agenda item 84 was the appropriate item for its implementation. The words "invites" and "requests" had thus been included in paragraph 9. It was believed that such an interpretation, taking into account the views of the members of the Committee, was an acceptable compromise. The reason why the last sentence of paragraph 38 of the annex to resolution 51/241 had not been included was that it did not contain any element that was appropriate for inclusion in the operative part of a resolution. However, he agreed with the comment of the representative of China and proposed, as a compromise, that the last sentence of paragraph 38 should be included in paragraph 9.

67. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that the draft resolution, as revised, would be adopted by consensus and that the following year, in the light of the recommendations that had been made, the question would be considered in greater detail. In that connection, it was understood that the significance of the Scientific Committee should not be reduced.

68. **The Chairman** invited the members of the Committee to take note of the proposal for the inclusion in paragraph 9 of an additional sentence, as a compromise, in view of the comment of the representative of China.

69. **Mr. Hu Zhaoming** (China) said that he was satisfied with the reply and the explanation given by the representative of Germany and he was grateful for the recommendation that the last sentence of paragraph 38 should be included in paragraph 9 of the draft resolution. His delegation attached great significance to the work of the Scientific Committee and hoped that it would discharge the mandate entrusted to it. Taking those considerations into account, his delegation would join the consensus.

70. **Mr. Hassan** (Pakistan) said that his delegation was fully satisfied with the explanations given by the representatives of Germany and Brazil to the effect that the role and functions of the Scientific Committee would be in no way reduced and that all decisions would be taken after the submission of the report to IAEA and WHO. However, his delegation supported the recommendation of the Open-

ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System. Since it was not clear what the role and functions of the Scientific Committee would ultimately be, his delegation would support the draft resolution but would not be among its sponsors.

71. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to adopt the draft resolution, as orally revised by the representative of Germany, without a vote.

72. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

Organization of work

73. **The Chairman** noted that, in accordance with the decision taken earlier by the Committee, decisions on all the draft resolutions concerning decolonization would be taken on Monday, 27 October 1997. Moreover, with a view to making the Committee's workload and the voting procedure easier, the Secretariat would, at the beginning of the following week, issue document A/C.4/52/L.7, which would indicate the symbol of the documents and the order in which decisions on the draft resolutions would be adopted by the Committee.

74. In response to a request he had received from the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, he suggested that the Committee should listen to a briefing by the Rapporteur of the Special Committee on decolonization, speaking on behalf of its Chairman, on the informal consultations with the Secretary-General of the United Nations in connection with draft resolution A/C.4/52/L.4.

75. *It was so agreed.*

76. **Mr. Mekdad** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking on behalf of the Chairman of the Special Committee on decolonization, said that he wished to inform the members of the Committee about the meeting with the Secretary-General of the United Nations held on 15 October. At the beginning of the meeting, the Secretary-General had informed the sponsors of the draft resolution that he was directly involved in questions concerning the work of the Committee and that he had discussed issues relating to decolonization with the Presidents and Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the countries concerned. He had emphasized that his proposal was of a purely administrative nature and that the Special Committee on decolonization would be guaranteed the necessary services in the forthcoming period.

77. The Chairman of the Special Committee on decolonization had emphasized that the position of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.4/52/L.4 was not related to the reforms implemented by the Secretary-General. The sponsors of the draft resolution felt it was essential to state that the decolonization programme should remain in the Department of Political Affairs in view of the political nature of decolonization measures. The members of the Special Committee on decolonization had felt it essential to point out that agreement with the Secretary-General's decision could be misinterpreted by the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories since that step would, in their view, signify that the United Nations was leaving them to the mercy of fate. It had been emphasized that that direction of administrative reform had very serious consequences for the political substance of the work of the Special Committee on decolonization. The Chairman of the Special Committee, on behalf of the sponsors of the draft resolution, had appealed to the Secretary-General to reconsider his decision. After the statement by the Chairman of the Special Committee on decolonization, the floor was given to the sponsors of the draft resolution, who confirmed their position, as stated by the Chairman, and noted, in particular, that the Secretary-General should reconsider his decision. The Permanent Representative of Portugal had proposed that action on the Secretary-General's decision should be postponed until the expiry of the mandate of the Special Committee on decolonization and the completion of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, in other words until the year 2000. In the ensuing discussion, the Secretary-General suggested that he should be given one year to check the effectiveness of his proposal, after which he would either leave it in force, if it proved to be correct, or rescind it, if it was not justified.

78. After the meeting with the Secretary-General, the sponsors of the draft resolution met once again and discussed the proposal. All the speakers reaffirmed that the decolonization programme must remain in the Department of Political Affairs and noted, in particular, that the Secretary-General's attention should be drawn to the decisions and positions of the sponsors of the draft resolution to the effect that they insisted that the programme should remain in the Department of Political Affairs. A letter was sent to the Secretary-General. The sponsors of the draft resolution expressed the hope that their request would be met, since it was based on purely political considerations, the work of the Special Committee on Decolonization being essentially of a political nature.

79. **Mr. Hu Zhaoming** (China) thanked the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for the briefing and said that the measures taken by the Secretary-General should be studied carefully. At present, that could be done in the informal consultative group of the General Assembly. In order to facilitate consideration of the question referred to by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, his delegation

would like to request that representative, through the Chairman, to provide the information given in his briefing in writing for circulation to deiegations.

80. **The Chairman** said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to that request. He hoped that the consultations between the Secretary-General and the sponsors of the draft resolution would lead to a mutually acceptable result satisfactory to both sides.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.